

Message Text

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43

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DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:TJCAROLAN:JFC

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H - MR. SCHNEE

NEA/ARN - MR. BULLEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 212380

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, JO, U.S.

SUBJECT: HAWK MISSILES AND CONGRESS

1. IN PERSONAL LETTERS DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 2 TO ALL 100 US SENATORS AND 50 CONGRESSMEN, KING HUSSEIN APPEALED FOR FAVORABLE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE PROPOSED SALE OF 14 HAWK BATTERIES TO JORDAN. EMPHASIZING THAT THE WEAPONS ARE VITAL TO HIS COUNTRY'S AIR DEFENSE NEEDS, HE INDICATED THEY WOULD BE USED "TO DEFEND THE AREA OF OUR CAPITAL AND A FEW OF OUR MAJOR FIXED INSTALLATIONS." THE KING DWELT AT LENGTH ON JORDAN'S NONAGGRESSIVE POLICIES AND ITS TRADITIONALLY CLOSE AND SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S., BUT HE CONCLUDED HIS LETTER BY STATING THAT IF THE 14 BATTERIES ARE DENIED HIM, HE WOULD -- "WITH THE GREATEST SORROW" -- BE OBLIGED TO SEEK COMPARABLE WEAPONRY FROM THE SOVIET UNION. OUR PRELIMINARY SOUNDINGS ON THE HILL INDICATE THAT HUSSEIN MAY NOT HAVE HELPED HIS CAUSE BY POSING THE ISSUE SO STARKLY, ALTHOUGH HIS REMARKS MERELY ECHO WHAT HE HAS ALREADY STATED PUBLICLY ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS IN RECENT WEEKS.

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2. DOD RESUBMITTED THE NOTIFICATION OF THE HAWK LETTER OF

OFFER TO CONGRESS FOR THE THIRD TIME ON SEPTEMBER 3. (THE 20-DAY PERIOD REQUIRED UNDER THE NELSON AMENDMENT FOR CONGRESS TO CONSIDER THE SALE WILL EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT ON SEPTEMBER 22.) CONGRESSMEN BINGHAM, SOLARZ AND SEVEN OF THEIR HOUSE COLLEAGUES RESPONDED BY RE-TABLING THEIR EARLIER CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE HAWK SALE. WHILE THIS PRO FORMA REACTION WAS EXPECTED IN THAT IT PRESERVES STATUS QUO AS OF JULY 30, IT SERVES TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE ADMINISTRATION TO WORK OUT A COMPROMISE SOLUTION THAT WILL ALLAY CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS REGARDING THE SALE. ROBINSON

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